

PBA NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 4

APRIL 1977

INDIAN HAWTHORNE

by JOYCE PELLETIER

During the Christmas holidays I received a call from a stranger asking for advice on how to care for a bonsai plant which she had received as a gift. The woman called it an "Indian hawthorn." Since I was not familiar



**ORIGINAL DRAWING
by MRS. FERN JACOBI**

with the plant, I did some research and identified it as Raphiolepis indica, a member of a small genus of slow-growing, evergreen shrubs with firm, leathery leaves. The genus Raphiolepis is a member of the rose family, and originated in Asia. The species R. indica came from southern China.

Raphiolepis are popular in California and along the Gulf Coast where they are grown as ornamental shrubs or ground covers in a variety of soils, in full sun or partial shade. (Their maximum height is about 5 feet.) They can stand a slight frost, but cannot be grown outdoors safely north of Zone 7 (Georgia). They do well in a cool greenhouse.

Since I am always on the lookout for woody material suitable for indoor bonsai, I asked if I could look at the Indian hawthorn. I found it to be charming and somewhat delicate in appearance--suitable for any size bonsai, including mame. The leaves are dark green on top (lighter underneath), narrow, elliptic, with short stalks, arranged alternately, and having blunt-toothed margins. The leaves are normally 2 to 3 inches long, but those on the bonsai I saw had already dwarfed to 1 to 1-1/2 inches.

Raphiolepis has two further bonuses--it both flowers and fruits. The apple blossom-like flowers are pinkish-white, about 1/2 inch across, arranged in loose clusters which bloom from late winter, through spring, and into summer. Dark blue berries follow. The bark is light tan and finely grained. I imagine it would bruise easily, so covered wire for shaping branches is probably advisable. Twigs for the past two years are flexible, but older wood is difficult to shape. Another big plus for Raphiolepis--it buds back on old wood. That's a big advantage in bonsai.

Raphiolepis is propagated by cuttings in late summer; by seed; or by layering. It does well in the house, but prefers a cool room with lots of sun.

Let's hear it for Raphiolepis, and don't forget--if you give a bonsai as a gift, be sure to enclose growing instructions with it. --Joyce Pelletier

COMPOST RECIPE

SOMETHING ROTTING TODAY WILL MAKE A SWEET TOMORROW

Almost any non-woody plant material from lawn and gardens.
Vegetable kitchen scraps, egg shells, and coffee grounds.
Wood ashes from fireplace.
Animal droppings, cow or horse manure.
Common garden soil.
Water as needed.
Balanced fertilizer or compost starter preparation (optional).

In the spring or summer, make a layer of plant materials, kitchen scraps, etc., on the bare ground or in a shallow hole and cover this layer with at least 3 inches of common soil, and water this layer until it is damp throughout. There are three reasons for this soil covering: (1) to promote decomposition by adding soil bacteria to the vegetable matter; (2) to prevent odors; and (3) esthetic considerations. Repeat this procedure, alternating layers of plant materials, etc., with soil until pile height becomes unmanageable. When this point is reached or when you have collected as much compost-to-be as you need, turn the pile

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onto a nearby area of bare ground using a shovel or garden fork. The reason for using a tool to do this is that this melange gets HOT as it decomposes. Turning is needed to expose all areas of material to the composting process and should be done every 3 to 4 weeks in warm weather. After two turnings, the composting should be complete, except in winter when this process slows. Sieve the composted material to remove unwanted materials and use it as you would any loam.

I have said to start your compost on bare ground. This is the least involved method, and, of course, the least costly one. It is also the least manageable one. You can get as fancy as you want but the end product will be essentially the same. Several more elaborate methods are:

Pits dug side by side into which the compost is moved in turn. This method supplies earth for the layering process which, of course, came from the holes you dug.

Ash cans with holes in the bottom for drainage. The compost, however, does not know its ash can from a hole in the ground.

Above-ground enclosures either homemade or commercially available. But, as I said, you don't have to get fancy.

Cautions:

Never use diseased or insect infested plant materials. Tomato vines, for instance, almost always harbor some disease; besides they are too woody.

Don't overdo the wood ashes--they are high in potash.

Never, never use cat droppings or used kitty litter from the cat's litter box. The danger here is toxoplasmosis.

Do not over- or under-water your compost pile. It should be damp, not soggy. Never let it dry out either.

If you use commercial fertilizer to promote composting, use it sparingly. It is not needed, but it does speed the process. Compost starter compounds do work but they are not needed if you interlay the compost with earth.

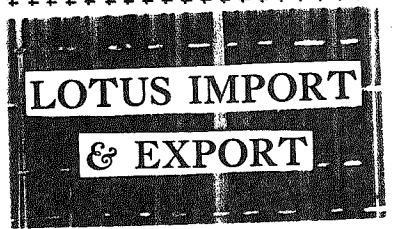
Always handle unfinished compost with a tool of some sort and wear gloves. The decomposing plant material in the center of the pile can generate temperatures as high as 140°F.

Don't throw away grass clippings from your lawn or fall leaves. They not only make good mulch material but are even better compost materials. Never use grass clippings or any other plant materials which come from an area where weed killers have been used recently.

Don't throw away used potting soils, etc., from repotting. Bonsaiists can recycle used potting materials from healthy trees by adding these items to compost piles.

Lastly, don't worry about whether or not the compost system you choose will work. It probably will anyway since composting is a part of nature's plant cycle and it is pretty hard to fight nature. --Graham Houlton

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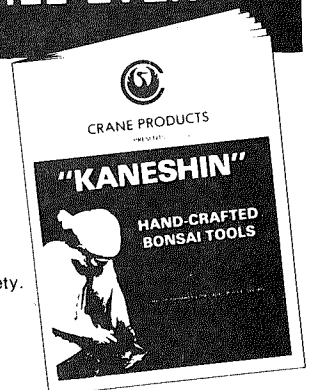
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THE PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

In thinking of the forthcoming elections and other PBA matters, I have been evaluating my ideas on the role of PBA in bonsai. It occurred to me that this would be something to share with the membership in the hope of eliciting other opinions, ideas, and, most important, participation and practical suggestions on how to involve a greater proportion of the membership in PBA activities.

As I see it, PBA is an affiliation of local clubs, which serves to increase the resources available to each member by bringing together a larger number of bonsai enthusiasts than is possible on a local basis. Therefore, PBA must be careful not to compete with local clubs, but function when the larger resources of all clubs working together is needed for successful activities (i.e., the Newsletter, annual symposium, annual spring show, etc.).

Although we attempt to be business-like, PBA is not a business, nor are the members employees who can be required to work. We are entirely dependent upon voluntary and willing donation of time and effort. It's my feeling that each of us has an obligation to help in some way. Unfortunately, there seem to be more takers than givers. As a result, many club activities succeed through the efforts of only a few active people. I have heard this being interpreted as things are run by an elite few for their own benefit. In a way that is true; the elitism comes about by the scarcity of volunteers. Those who do participate have the strongest influence. It is rather discouraging for these active people when they work hard on a program and the turnout is poor. For example, very few PBA members went to BCI '76 and there was only a slightly better attendance at the Fall Symposium. If you want good programs you must support them at least by attending, at best by helping to organize them. Our activities are limited by the manpower available to implement them and by the attendance. We quickly reach an endpoint in the number of activities we can support. Any more, and we further dilute what we have and run the risk of competing with local club programs. I would rather have a few good "highlight" programs per year than many that are poorly supported. ---Richard M. Meszler

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Walter Schmidt wishes to thank his friends in PBA who responded to his announcement and to inform all readers that he still has trees and other bonsai material for sale. Please refer to last month's Newsletter for directions.

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GRIT, AND DON'T BARE ROOT IT: REPOTTING TIME IS HERE


Somehow, my bonsai are always one step ahead of me. Just as I am beginning to come out of hibernation, thinking spring is just around the corner, my trees have been doing something about it and are starting to sprout. Then its: oops, I had better hurry up and start repotting. A few more warm days and it will be too late.

I gather the components for my soil mix and realize I need more than I thought. Those Naka-sized bonsai take quite a bit of soil. It's time for my annual pilgrimage to buy "Terragreen" and screened gravel.

"Terragreen" has not been easy to find in the Baltimore area. I get it from William G. Scarlet & Co., 632 President Street. It comes in 50-lb bags at about \$3.35 each. I buy two particle sizes: "Soil Conditioner" and "Junior Jumbo." It still has to be sifted to get out the dust, excessively large pieces, and to have more uniformly sized particles.

As for gravel, chicken grit is the thing. I buy it from Southern States Coop, Inc. It comes in 50-lb bags at \$.90 per bag and is available in three particle sizes: "brooder," "grower," and "developer." This, too, has to be sifted to remove dust, etc. It is certainly cheaper than the graded sand I used to get from a building supply company. Since it is crushed rock, the particles have sharper edges and rougher surfaces than quarried sand.

I also use peat in my soil mix. Usually, I measure out the sifted dry "Terragreen" into a large tray. Then I press moist peat through a coarse screen (about 1 cm mesh) to form it into small beads and mix it with the dry "Terragreen." This seems to harden the peat beads so they retain a particulate form in the soil mix. Last, I mix in the screened gravel. I store the different particulate sized soil mixes in the bags in which the original components come. That way they are all handy when I discover another tree that needs repotting yesterday. --Richard M. Meszler.



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member BONSAI ARTISTS LEAGUE

The judging for items to be displayed in the Brookside Gardens Bonsai Club section of the PBA annual show will be held on April 24 (Sunday) at the Sampson House in Wheaton Regional Park at 1:00 p.m. All BGB members are invited to submit finished display-quality trees for judging. In addition to the BGB display area, there will also be a PBA display area for mame. Trees for both these areas will be judged at the same time. No trees which have not been through this selection process will be considered for exhibit. For further details call Graham Houlton at 345-3606 after 7:00 p.m.

Brookside Gardens Bonsai Club announces the election of officers for the coming year. Elected to the Board of Directors were Harvey Everett (incumbent), Leroy Kingman, and Janet Lanman. Mary Houlton was elected to the PBA Board of Directors from BGB. The new officers are: Harvey Everett, president; Leroy Kingman, vice-president; Mary Houlton, educational vice-president; Molly Hersh, treasurer; and Milt Kidd, secretary. ---Mary Houlton

POTOMAC BONSAN ASSOCIATION
OFFICIAL BALLOT

INSTRUCTIONS

Each ballot will be valid if:

1. The envelope is signed for each ballot
DO NOT SIGN THE BALLOT
2. The ballot is mailed and postmarked before 15 May, 1977.
Tape or staple the attached envelope.

For **PRESIDENT**

- Richard Meszler

For **FIRST VICE PRESIDENT**

- Joyce Pelletier

For **EDUCATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

- Mary Houlton

For **SECRETARY**

- Milton R. Kidd

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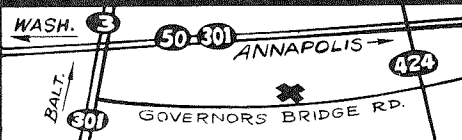
to be given to the incumbent PBA President for BCI Convention expenses.
Against. The PBA Board shall determine an amount, not to exceed \$100,

**13-
STAMP**

SIGNATURE(S)

CLUB CALENDAR

- ANNAPOLIS - April 12 (Tuesday), 7 p.m. Meet at the Bittersweet Nursery for a workshop on forest planting. Members should bring their own materials. Election of officers April 24 (Sunday), 10 a.m. Meet at the Annapolis Public Library for a collection trip.
May 13 (Friday), 7:30 p.m. Annapolis Public Library. Workshop. Bring own trees. Also bring trees for critique.
- BALTIMORE - April 16 (Saturday), 3 p.m. Cylburn Mansion in Cylburn Park. Business meeting and election of officers.
- BROOKSIDE - April 16 (Saturday). Instead of usual Friday evening conclave meet at Sampson House (it's in Brookside Park) at 10 a.m. Jim Everman of Los Angeles will conduct a saikai workshop. Bring own trees. Containers, soil rocks and soil will be available. Class is limited to first 15 members who call Mary Houlton at 345-3606. Observers are most welcome.
May 14 (Saturday). Instead of usual Friday evening gathering, meet at Sampson House (it's in Brookside Park) at 10 a.m. Beginners bring own materials. Some materials will be available.
- KIYOMIZU - April 24 (Sunday), 2 p.m., Clearwater Nature Center. Azalea bonsai demonstration by John Hinds. Bring trees for critique.
May 22 (Sunday), 2 p.m., Clearwater Nature Center. Beginners workshop. Bring own materials. Bring trees for critique.
- NOVABONSOC - April 9 (Saturday), 10 a.m., Gulf Branch Nature Center. Annual election of Northern Virginia Bonsai Society officers for 1977. Free baby trees to each paid-up member attending. Workshop. Bring tree to work on. Those who attended the Okamura workshop can pot and put finishing touches on trees styled in workshop. Members can bring trees ranging from favorite bonsai to real problem trees for viewing pleasure and for friendly advice.
May 14 (Saturday), 10 a.m., Gulf Branch Nature Center. Workshop. Bring trees and materials. Also bring problem trees for clinical analysis.
- WASHINGTON - March 19 (Saturday), 2 p.m., National Arboretum. Program changed to a styling workshop. Details to be mailed to members. Bring trees for critique.
April 16 (Saturday), 2 p.m., National Arboretum. Potting workshop. Details to be mailed to members. Bring trees for critique.
May 21 (Saturday), 2 p.m., National Arboretum. The March and April workshops culminate in an advanced workshop on this date.

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NOTE: For all members, the annual PBA meeting and election of officers takes place on May 21 at 10 a.m. in the Information Building of the National Arboretum. Annual dues are due by the end of April. Only paid-up members can vote in the PBA election. All club secretaries should submit an up-to-date membership list to Ms. Molly Hersh, 102 Devon Court, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

BONSAI CLASSES

As a service to its members the PBA Newsletter is pleased to publish the following bonsai class information from Bonsai Information Guild and the Yoshimura School of Bonsai.

Spring sessions of "Introduction to Bonsai" classes conducted by the Bonsai Information Guild, Inc. are scheduled as shown below. In most cases, out-of-county registrations will be accepted at a slightly higher tuition than that charged for county residents.

District of Columbia

- Course E1181, USDA Graduate School, National Arboretum Horticultural Series, at National Arboretum Greenhouse: four weekly 2-1/2 hour sessions at 10 a.m., starting April 9; for registration information call (202) 447-6337.

Maryland

- Leisure World Activity Center: four weekly 2-1/2 hour sessions at 10 a.m., starting May 7; for information call Mrs. Bryant, (301) 598-7660.
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation: two classes of four weekly 2-1/2 hour sessions each at 7:30 p.m., starting April 12 and April 14, locations to be announced; for registration information call (301) 468-4050.

Virginia

- Course 747, Arlington County Adult Education Program: two classes of four weekly 2-1/2 hour sessions each, one at 7:30 p.m., starting April 4 at the Career Center; one at 10 a.m., starting April 9 at Marshall School Lounge; for registration information call (703) 527-1036.
- Fairfax County Branch YWCA, Dunn Loring: four weekly 2-hour sessions at 7:30 p.m., starting April 12; for enrollment information call (703) 560-1111.

Mr. Yuji Yoshimura is offering all-day advanced bonsai lessons on the following schedule:

Tuesday classes from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the following dates:
April 5,12,19 and 26; May 3,10,17,24 and 31; June 7,14,21 and 28.

Thursday classes, same time schedule: April 7,14,21 and 28;
May 5,12,19 and 26; June 9,16,23 and 30.

The lesson fee is \$35 per lesson and students must prepare and handle their own material. The lesson fee includes ornamental sand, limited soils and moss for classroom use.

For further information write or call Mr. Yoshimura at P.O. Box 265, Scarborough Road, Briarcliff Manor, New York 10510. Telephone: (914) 762-2717.

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